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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1886  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1879  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1843  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1357  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1830  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1849  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1737  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1547  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1786  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1859  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1559  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS 1113  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0440

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 001998

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STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL  
NSC FOR MERKEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TI](#)

SUBJECT: ONE WEEK OUT: RAHMONOV'S PR CAMPAIGN STRENGTHENS, DPT DRAMA  
ESCALATES

REF: A) DUSHANBE 1773 B) DUSHANBE 1848 C) DUSHANBE 1863 D) DUSHANBE 1931 E) DUSHANBE 1935

CLASSIFIED BY: TJACOBSON, AMBASSADOR, STATE, STATE.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: With six days to go before the election, the pocket party candidates have hit the campaign trail and look more like public relations agents campaigning for Rahmonov than candidates in their own right. The Democratic Party of Tajikistan's (DPT) drama continues with the remnant DPT trying to ratchet up their profile by appealing to the OSCE and international community to intervene in the party's split; while the Vatan faction faces internal rifts of its own. The Commonwealth of Independent States mission has already hit the press and declared no serious violations have been committed so far. END SUMMARY.

CANDIDATES HIT THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL TOGETHER

12. (SBU) The four candidates running against incumbent President Rahmonov are traveling throughout Tajikistan together to deliver their stump speeches and spread their platform messages. However, thus far, it appears as if their campaign trail is actually helping Rahmonov. Media reports have quoted candidates plugging Rahmonov, unwilling to publicly criticize him and unable to promote themselves as better leaders. A presidential representative traveled with the candidates.

13. (U) Socialist Party of Tajikistan (SPT) candidate Abdulahim Ghafforov admitted that it is not easy for him to be "a great person of the nation, as is Rahmonov." The Communist Party of Tajikistan's candidate, Ismoil Talbakov said, "Emomali Rahmonov has done much for the people and he has his place in our history."

14. (SBU) The weak campaign messages of the Party of Economic Reforms of Tajikistan, Agrarian Party of Tajikistan, Socialist

Party of Tajikistan and the Communist Party and their candidates' inability to distinguish themselves and criticize Rahmonov's actions and policies actually help make Rahmonov look like the best candidate.

#### THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY BATTLE- NO ONE WINS

15. (C) . With the government's support, the Ministry of Justice and the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda have now recognized the breakaway Vatan faction as the official Democratic Party of Tajikistan (see Ref C and previous). The Ministry of Justice now considers the case closed and has left it to the Supreme Court to decide any appeals from the original DPT.

16. (C) OSCE Political Officer informed PolOff the original DPT faction, headed by imprisoned chairman Mahmadruzzi Iskandarov, wrote a letter to the OSCE mission desperately requesting the OSCE "not to stay impartial" in the DPT rift. The party reminded the OSCE that the organization's position in the conflict between Russia and Georgia "added value to the OSCE prestige in the international scene." The organization is deliberating on its response. Although the court case is ongoing, the DPT is impatient and does not have confidence the heavily politicized Tajik courts will rule in Iskandarov's supporters' favor. By seeking OSCE support, the party is attempting to raise its profile to the international arena. The local OSCE mission's political officer has advised headquarters that this is an internal matter that has not been fully exhausted legally and to refrain from becoming involved at the present.

17. (C) To complicate things even more, Masud Sobirov, Chairman of the breakaway Vatan faction of the DPT, admitted to Embassy

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sources that the faction itself is facing an internal rift. Sobirov and Vatan's First Deputy Chairman, S. Ismonov, who supported the party financially, are now vying for power. In a bizarre twist, Sobirov sabotaged his own party's chances of running a candidate during the presidential election. He alleged the government helped gather the required 165,000 signatures so that the party could run Tabarali Ziyoev as its presidential candidate. Upon receiving the petitions, he burned them. He explained that he did this because he did not deem Ziyoev a worthy candidate for president.

#### CIS OBSERVATION MISSION GETS A HEAD START

18. (U) The 200-plus strong Commonwealth of Independent States election observation mission has already made press statements declaring that it has seen no serious violations in election procedure thus far. The OSCE/ODIHR has made some preliminary remarks to the press, but has refrained from drawing conclusions. They will issue an interim report immediately following the election. OSCE/ODIHR will conduct observer training November 3 for all observers, including 23 embassy observers. Post will deploy embassy observers throughout the country November 4-7 to observe and report on voting practices.

19. (C) COMMENT: Although the election results are a foregone conclusion, the process still needs to be monitored. The Democratic Party of Tajikistan's drama will last through the election and the court's decision post-election will be indicative of how tightly Rahmonov will hold onto power in his third term. Another sign will be how the administration reacts to the international observers' reports. Judging from its pre-election myopia, the CIS report will be much more favorable than the ODIHR mission's report. END COMMENT.  
JACOBSON